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CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Congregationalist

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
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"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." — Galatians 5:1

OUR EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

"We may well start our discussion," said the young minister in charge of a group of teachers of Senior High classes in the Church Schools of a district Association, "by going around the group, each one telling what is being used in his Church School for material in the Senior High grade." Various things were named and elicited little comment from the leader until one man said, "We are teaching the history of Congregationalism, using the Atkins-Fagley book for resource materials." The young leader looked shocked. "What! Teaching about Congregationalism? Why, that is not the sort of thing we want our young people to know! That is not Christianity, that is denominationalism."

This may be an unusual incident, but not far from typical of the attitude taken by many young, and some older, Congregationalists of recent years. Among the many facts which have been revealed during the course of discussions on the merger, one stands out very plainly. Few Congregational people have any clear idea of what Congregationalism is. The reasons for this are many. There has been, for one, the belief expressed by the young minister quoted above, that there is something wrong with people knowing how their order of churches came into being and for what they stand.

The highly commendable improvement in interdenominational relations, so that few Protestant groups today declare their way to be the only Christian way, has exhibited its seamy side in this ignorance of the meaning of our free tradition. And the fact that members transfer freely among most denominations, so that Congregational Churches frequently have a large proportion of their membership drawn from fellowships with other backgrounds, has added to the confusion in the minds of our people.

A Place for Free Churchmanship

When the National Association was formed for the purpose of witnessing to and maintaining the Free Church Way, it was not done in any spirit of sectarian narrowness. It was done, however, in the conviction that our traditional free churchmanship has a place in this highly organized world, and that it can and must continue in the days to come to bear this witness even as in the days of our fathers.

If we are to bear witness to the Free Church Way, a great educational task lies before us. With this fact in mind, the National Association, prompted by the initiative taken by the Commission on Women's Work, has begun an unusual "Educational Project," with the goal of widespread participation by members, ministers, and Church Schools of all our member Churches, in studying and writing upon Congregationalism.

The aim is expressed as "to promote a better understanding of Congregationalism, what it is, whence it came, how it developed, what it contributed to the American way of life, what current trends threaten its survival, and how it can best serve God today."

The Awards

With all awards provided by private subscription, a competition is invited among our people. For creating and implementing a curriculum designed to promote understanding of Congregationalism in our Church Schools, awards will be made to Education Departments of our Churches for purchase of educational materials, as follows:

Primary, first prize, $100.00, second prize, $50.00

Junior, first prize, $100.00, second prize, $50.00

Senior, first prize, $100.00, second prize, $50.00

Awards will also be made to individuals for the best demonstrations of Congregational principles by:

Article or essay,
first prize, $100.00, second prize, $50.00

Drama or play,
first prize, $100.00, second prize, $50.00

Travel talk, with film or slides on Congregational history,
first prize, $100.00, second prize, $50.00

Local church history or Congregational history of a state,
first prize, $100.00, second prize, $50.00

Anthem based on a familiar hymn tune or complete hymn,
first prize, $100.00, second prize, $50.00

And for ministers, for the best sermon of the year on Congregational ideology, the winning sermon to be delivered at the 1959 National Association Annual Meeting,
first prize, $100.00, second prize, $50.00.

All entries must be submitted to the office of the National Association not later than August 1, 1959, and must be accompanied by bibliography of reference material used. Manuscripts should be typed, double spaced, and enclosed in an envelope clearly labeled with name and address of author, on the envelope only, and sent to "Educational Project," National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, 176 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee 3, Wisconsin. Judging will be anonymous, the decision of the judges shall be final, winning entries shall become the property of the National Association, and winners announced and prizes awarded at the Annual Meeting of 1959.

An Opportunity for All

Here is your opportunity! The advancement of the Congregational Way will not be accomplished by official publications or the work of elected or employed officers of the National Association. You can do your part by entering a manuscript for this project. Start now! Put your brains, your experience, and your ideals to work. Perhaps you will win a prize, but in any case you will be enriching the fund of knowledge and understanding for all our churches, and you will find the reward even greater than money, in your own increased appreciation of the debt we owe to those "exiled fathers" of long ago, and the opportunity for carrying into our age and that to come, the influence their way has had, and from which we have all been benefited.

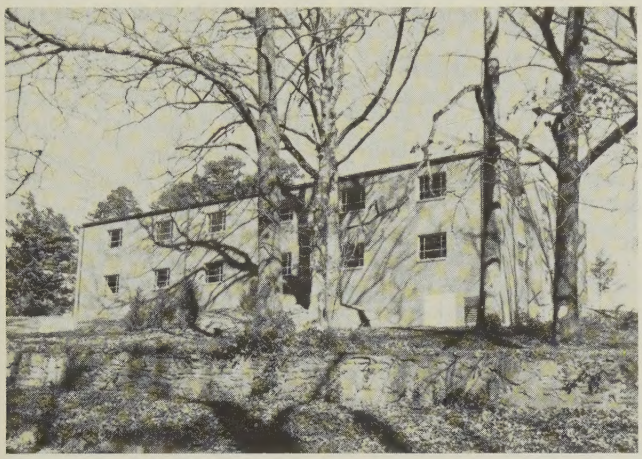
* * *

Our cover picture is the Kenduskeag Stream at Bangor, Maine, courtesy Dr. M. J. Bradshaw.

HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE HELP THEMSELVES

Dr. James E. Walter, President
Piedmont College, Demorest, Georgia

During my twelve years of directing study tours among home missionary schools and churches of the Congregational Christian Churches, no group of young people was ever more appealing to visitors from New England and the Mid-West than the boys and girls of the Appalachian foothills at Piedmont College. Their sincerity and eagerness were ever appealing. Their promise and industry invited wholehearted partnership.



King Science Hall, Piedmont College.

During the past nine years as president of Piedmont College I have had these impressions reaffirmed by many wonderful experiences. The hope that was in the hearts of those who founded the College in 1897 has been fulfilled many times. Young people who would have otherwise had no opportunity to go to college, except for the open doors at Piedmont, have achieved important roles of community leadership. They have made good in education, homemaking, medicine, law, ministry, business, and the great field of human relations.

Our program depends entirely on the gifts of interested individuals and local churches. Piedmont College not only teaches the tenets of free enterprise, but in reality our own life depends on the free will support of all who believe in the worthwhileness of helping young people who are eager and able to help themselves.

Our Philosophy

A sound principle of American democracy and religious faith is the doctrine of aiding worthy and talented young people to help themselves become better citizens. At Piedmont College we believe in making quality education available to every young man and woman who has the ability and ambition to earn a college degree. Many of our 300 students work on the campus in the kitchen, dining hall, business offices, Thrift Shop (used clothing store for the college and community), Praline Candy Shop, library, and Maintenance Department. Others who live at home work on the farm, clerk in the family store, or do some other work to help meet their college expenses.

Over 85% of our young men and women come from homes in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in North Georgia, and the Carolinas. Others come from South Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky, New England, the Midwest, and overseas. Our students have an inspiring diligence and a deep sincerity of purpose. They want high quality education, and they want it enough to work hard for it. Approximately 60% of our 1,922 graduates (since 1897) have become teachers, 35% entered business, and 5% law, medicine, and the ministry. A gift of $150 is needed by the college every day of the year to supplement tuition payments and other income.

Our Ideal of Christian Character

The trends of our day have encouraged many young people to expect something for nothing from the government or somebody else. At Piedmont College we encourage young people to help themselves through our Work-Aid and Scholarship program.

We are proud of our students. They want a college education enough to work hard for it. They are glad to work wherever and whenever needed to earn a major part of their way through college. We are proud of our supporting donors. They want a free world enough to sponsor quality education in the atmosphere of free enterprise among sincere young people who desire to become better citizens.

Students, faculty, and donors together believe in the practical ideals of integrity, industry, and religious faith. Such devotion to truth has made America great. Although these are days of severe temptation, we purpose to hold fast to the high standards of honor, hard work, and integrity.

Chemistry students at work in King Science Hall, Piedmont College.

Your gift to our current program will be matched by the industry and sincerity of the student you help. Your gift to our current program, and your legacy for our Endowment Fund will underwrite the future of Christian quality education for young men and women who come to Piedmont College from the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. We depend on God and friends like you to keep the opportunities of a Christian college education within the reach of worthy and promising young men and women.

JURIST EXPOSES MISLEADING STATEMENTS

(The following letter was written on December 29, 1958, to the Editor of THE UNITED CHURCH HERALD by the Hon. Henry A. Middleton of Toledo, Ohio, and is published here by permission of the writer.)

Law Offices of
MIDDLETON, MORGAN & LEATHERMAN
Toledo 4, Ohio

December 29, 1958

ANDREW VANCE MCCRACKEN
Editor, UNITED CHURCH HERALD
289 Fourth Avenue
New York 10, New York
Dear Sir:

Having been a subscriber to the ADVANCE I have received a renewal notice from the UNITED CHURCH HERALD and others. I have never subscribed to the UNITED CHURCH HERALD and I have no subscription to "renew." For a number of reasons, I wish not to subscribe to it. I was inclined to write to you immediately upon receipt of the renewal notice but delayed writing until I could give the matter thorough consideration.

The printed notice requesting "renewal" of the UNITED CHURCH HERALD says that UNITED CHURCH HERALD brings ADVANCE and THE MESSENGER into one publication "whose mission is to keep each member of each congregation in touch *with the larger fellowship to which he belongs.*" (Emphasis mine.)

This statement is carefully worded to convey the idea that Congregational churches and members thereof *now* belong to a larger fellowship, to-wit, the United Church of Christ.

You know, and the officials know, that there is no "larger fellowship" to which Congregationalists belong because of the fictitious "merger" supposed to have been effected at Cleveland in 1957.

The primary purpose to be achieved by UNITED CHURCH HERALD is clearly stated in the editorial written by you which appears on pages 2 and 3 of the October issue. The editorial clearly announces that this new publication is primarily a propaganda magazine to promote the merger. In the opening paragraph you state in substance that the publication must have guiding principles and ideas. You then say that "under the 'suasion' of such ruling principles" UNITED CHURCH HERALD "will help infuse and integrate our many local churches, our various boards and state organizations and the members of our United Church of Christ. . . ." The statements in your editorial are said to state the "primary concerns and ultimate objectives" of the new journal. You state that the co-editors agreed at the start that the journal "must provide concrete visible evidence that the United Church of Christ is in the process of becoming a reality" and "that there is no more effective way of proclaiming *the fact of the Union and carrying the news of it into homes of the members of the United Church of Christ* than by publication of a united magazine based on a clear concept of the United Church of Christ and its role in our disturbed world."

Your editorial further refers to the "how-do-you-do" articles which you propose to publish to introduce the members "to each other and to their common activities."

In another paragraph you state your intention to feature and prominently display "progress reports on the union of the Foreign and Home Land agencies of the United Church of Christ as well as merger activities at the local level, thereby giving readers concrete evidence that union is going forward on all levels of church structure."

Those statements are deliberately intended to convey the erroneous impression that the members of the Congregational churches are now members of a new and different church known as the United Church of Christ.

To have advertised in magazines and newspapers, as was done and at great expense, that the Congregational Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church were united at Cleveland was unpardonable. Your publication continues this deceptive propaganda and your columns are not open to one word of question, discussion or argument on the subject of the merger.

The cost of your publication is being paid in part by money contributed by Congregationalists but they cannot be heard in your columns except in such way as to promote the proposed merger.

Although, when pressed, the officials admit that there has been no merger and the trusting membership are advised to "wait and see the Constitution" which, they are told, will preserve Congregationalism, every known method of European propaganda is being used to "condition" the membership and tie them into a new and different church before anyone knows what it will be. While they "wait and see," without information and with no means of learning the facts or the truth, the churches are being undermined. While trusting Congregationalists wait and see, Rome is burning.

Such methods may be condoned by church leaders but they are not followed by honest laymen.

Your publication has deserted the Congregational churches. It is misleading the membership of those churches. It is a tragedy that such protests as this are resented and ignored.

Sincerely yours,
HENRY A. MIDDLETON

Have You Read These?

The following materials are obtainable (in limited quantity without charge) from The League to Uphold Congregational Principles, P. O. Box 628, Hartford 1, Conn.

THE WHITE BOOK — "Let's Have Full Knowledge and Straight Thinking About this Union."

"Compulsion Marks the Death of Fellowship" (three-act play).

BLUE BOOK — "They're Planning to Take Your Church into New and Different Denomination."

"Is the Church Replacing Christ?" by Rev. Howard Conn, D.D.

"Submerging Congregationalism" by Rev. Prof. M. J. Bradshaw, Ph.D.

"The Real Question" by M. W. Hughes, et al.

Miscellaneous comments on the request for a legal determination of the rights and powers of the Congregational Churches and their fellowship bodies.

WOMEN'S WORK

Mrs. Paul A. Quaintance, Los Angeles, California

IS YOUR CHURCH IN ORBIT?

The Geophysical Year 1958 has come to a close but the knowledge gained and the contributions made to the field of science through the launching of space ships and satellites will continue to influence our thought, planning, international relationships, actions and reactions for years to come.

The National Association, too, in 1958 launched a satellite from the platform of the Annual Meeting in Detroit — a project for the gaining of knowledge and bettering of appreciation for Christian truths as they have been revealed through Congregational precepts and practice. This project has been proclaimed as one of unusual importance to members of our fellowship. Printed brochures, mimeographed announcements and letters to the ministers of our churches and presidents of committees and organizations have publicized it. But unlike the satellites that circle rhythmically in outer space, our Congregational project is designed to "go into orbit" within the continuing Congregational fellowship. Its impact in furthering our goals will depend entirely on the "beep beep" or "talk back" from the Church membership and those who espouse the cause of the Free Church.

The vast amount of knowledge to be gathered about Congregationalism — what it is, from whence it came, its evolution in America, its leaders and heroes, its contribution to the American Way of Life — is available to all of us. That information will be ours only as each one of us uses his own eyes to read and study the materials preserved for us from the past; uses his own mind to evaluate the ideologies, practices and influences in various parts of history which modified previous conclusions; and uses his own time and talent to reason, appraise and to express in writing his understanding of and appreciation of our great Congregational heritage.

How Can You Get Your Church "Into Orbit"?

1. See that printed announcements of the project are available to members. Request them from the National Association office if for any reason your church has not yet received them.

2. Plan for an all-church meeting when the project is launched and made known to the membership of the church.

3. Create enthusiasm for participation in the project. Distribute the brochures to the interested members.

4. Obtain materials from the National Association office that will guide you in your study. Ask for the Study Packet, the booklet "Stimulating Suggestions" ($1.00) and Congregational Book List.

5. Help your minister establish a Congregational Book Shelf in your Church library for circulating materials.

6. Cooperate with your city or county librarian in establishing a Congregational reference shelf for the duration of the contest and see to it that church members know that it is available to them.

7. Organize study groups for book reviews and discussion in promoting clearer understanding of present Congregational issues.

8. Plan for a second Church meeting — a banquet, picnic or social group when different ones, representing Congregational heroes, present and interpret some of the information gathered. Or, present a tableau or chronological history, with the contribution your Church has made as one of the scenes.

Let us know when you hear the signals beginning to operate in your Church and how you are interpreting them. Your ideas will thus be shared with others in the tradition of true Congregational fellowship. If you are getting no response in your Church, examine your receiving set. If you still get no response and would like further suggestions, let us hear from you at the National Association office. We who profess belief in the Continuing Congregational Cause and who claim allegiance to the Free Church must know that steadfastness of conviction based on knowledge and understanding will be required of all of us in the last mile to victory.

Minister: "Do you know what I did when I received the printed announcement about the Educational Project? I sat right down and wrote new words to my favorite hymn tune."

Member: "Wonderful! I hope you send it in and win a prize in competition with others. I hope even more that you share the announcements with others and that you inspire them also to participate in one or more of the categories listed."

Minister: "You're right. I promise."

MEET THESE YOUNG CHINESE LADIES

Our mission in Hong Kong to minister to the millions of Chinese Refugees has built up a crowded church of some 800 church members. In the great fire that destroyed thousands of homes, their church also was burned. Sunday by Sunday since, they have been worshipping in the rented rooms of the pastor — four groups each Sunday.

The women of the church sought how they might help raise funds for their new church and Sunday School and the Berea Bible School. They set to work to dress Chinese dolls to send as gifts to Sunday Schools or youth groups who would undertake to raise funds large or small. Recently these beautifully dressed young Chinese ladies arrived and we shall be happy to introduce them to your group.

Our Commission on Missions has adopted the Hong Kong Mission to the suffering persecuted Chinese Christians at Kowloon as well as the Formosa churches serving the refugee camps on that crowded island.

For information write to:

Dr. Howell D. Davies, 100 No. La Salle St., Chicago 2, Illinois.

Dr. Max Strang, Box 163, Marshalltown, Iowa.

Rev. Edward H. Smith, Missionary Home, 138 Hancock St., Auburndale, Mass.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Rev. Neil H. Swanson, Jr., Milwaukee, Wisconsin

What Can I Do?

When a problem is big to the point of being overwhelming, many people become frustrated into doing nothing. The plaint of one such person was expressed in the question, "What can you do when you can't do anything?"

Fortunately, there are not too many problems in which this is literally the truth. And even though many individuals may feel this way about the drive to establish the United Church of Christ, their feeling is not realistic. It is understandable, but it is not realistic.

For example, one can understand the frustration of a pro-Congregational person who is a member of a church with an aggressive pro-merger minister in which the pro-merger point of view dominates and in which a moratorium has been imposed on discussion of the merger issues. Such a person might well cry out, "What can I do when I can't do anything?"

The answer is that even in such a situation there are many worthwhile things which can be done. Consider a few possibilities.

1. Mail a printed leaflet with a personal letter to various individuals in your church and in other churches. Leaflets such as "The Story of the Merger," "Church Property and Church Unions," "Should Lay People Ask Questions?" are particularly appropriate.

2. Send names and addresses of people who might be interested in becoming "Friends of the National Association."

3. Subscribe to "The Congregationalist" for someone who ought to be receiving it.

4. Write a letter to someone in your church expressing your concern about the lack of any study-group. Perhaps this letter could be in the form of a suggestion to the chairman of one of your official boards proposing the formation of a study-group. Your argument might include a statement to this effect: Since the denominational boards and agencies are not waiting to see the constitution, but are in the process of uniting with the corresponding boards and agencies of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, why should study of the issues be delayed?

5. If the effort to establish an official study-group should fail, organize an unofficial group. It takes time to study the various documents. Those who study the issues now will be better prepared for intelligent discussion when the constitution is finally presented.

6. Have leaflets available to give the people. Give a leaflet to someone with the words, "Have you had the chance to read this?"

7. Ask questions! Put your questions to anyone who should be interested, questions like, "Are you aware of why so many people do not approve the Basis of Union?" "Do you realize what changes would occur if our church were to become a part of The United Church of Christ?" "Why can't we have a study group in our church?" "Do you really think all Christians should be members of one big church?"

My point is simply this. Anyone can do something. Even though the things that are done may seem very insignificant, there is no predicting what effect the planting of a few seeds may have. There is still time in this new year of 1959 for you to make a resolution that you will do something for the cause of Congregational freedoms — beginning now!

The Mayflower Congregational Church of Grand Rapids, (gathered in 1958), now worships in this school.

Site of the new building planned for Mayflower Congregational Church.

These two pictures provide a view of the present and a forecast of the future for the newly organized Mayflower Congregational Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Meeting now in a school, the church has plans for building its own meeting house on the excellent site designated by the sign with its symbolic ship.

AN EDITORIAL

"Be Not Conformed"

It is becoming increasingly evident that one of the aims of the proposed union is to destroy Congregationalism. Leaders not only of the presently proposed action, but of the ecumenical movement in general, are making it clear that if their aim of "The Coming Great Church" is to be realized, the fundamental principle on which Congregationalism is founded must be discarded.

Nearly twenty years ago Dr. Charles Clayton Morrison on his "What Is Christianity"? wrote, "Congregationalism is the ultimate sectarianism," and "It is in Congregationalism, which makes a sect of every local church, that we have an unambiguous disclosure of the essential Protestant heresy." And he goes one step farther, by saying, "Protestantism has kept on dividing. It is now becoming evident that it cannot unite and remain Protestant. A united church cannot be built on Protestant foundations."

Readers of recent numbers of THE CONGREGATIONALIST will recall quotations from distinguished officials of the Congregational fellowship to much the same effect. As time goes on, the true aim of the movement becomes clearer. Just as an ancient Roman is said to have reiterated his famous slogan "Carthago delenda est" ("Carthage must be destroyed") ecumenical leaders are crying out in one way or another, "Congregationalism must be destroyed."

One of the reasons set forth is that free churches are "powerless to act in many areas of present day life," that "voluntary action cannot be depended on to meet the needs of explosive problems." The idea is abroad that in a day of increasing consolidation and centralization in much of our life, an effective church must also be consolidated and centralized. A distinguished Congregational minister, since deceased, once said to the writer that he feared that Congregationalism had become an anachronism in a day when identical Ford parts could be obtained from Maine to California and when chain hotels are found in most of our cities.

But the greatest influence Christians have had through the centuries has not come because they were "conformed to this world," but because they have become different from the world. Christians of our day will do well to heed the words of the Apostle Paul, "Be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Romans 12:2) History has shown that a Church organized after the ways of the world in the hope of compelling the world to change its ways, has lost its ability to transform anything for the better. The Kingdom of God does not come by might and power, but by souls under an inner compulsion to do the will of God as made known in Jesus Christ.

Ours is indeed a day, not only of identical Ford parts and chain hotels, but of reliance on organized power. It is against this reliance that Christian witness must be borne. Aim we must at the ideal of more truly transformed minds and hearts, but we must also stand firm against the unspiritual pressures of the day, and thus become part of that great company of those throughout the centuries who, by their refusal to be conformed to this world, have helped to transform it.

Our Devotional Column

Rev. Leslie G. Deinstadt, Cheyenne, Wyoming

"Let the Lord Take Care of Them"

A few days before a friend passed away, he said to his wife that he wasn't sure what to do about certain things. She replied quickly that he wasn't to worry about them, and then she added: "Let the Lord take care of them." I'm sure all of us at one time or another have spoken or heard that phrase. Perhaps it has intrigued you as it has me.

There is a sense in which this is the wrong answer, for we are not to "pass the buck" when we can do for ourselves. We've been given minds, voices, hands, feet; we are to think, speak, work, go; for we are indeed "laborers together with God." Laziness, stupidity, indifference are not words to characterize a Christian. But this was not the meaning of the words spoken to this man, and I would say that when these words are spoken and received properly, they show a high development of Christianity and spirituality.

These words confess the thing we hate to admit, that about most of the things of life, we are ignorant. The most intelligent among us has only a smattering of the knowledge available in this world, and still less of the world to come. We are finite creatures, limited in many ways. Is it any wonder that we have difficulty in understanding and explaining an infinite God, a Being without limitation?

Nor should we be ashamed to confess that we cannot understand or explain fully the things of the Spirit. The Apostle Paul put it this way: ". . . no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love Him."

That which is true of the infinite is equally true of the finite, for we have difficulty understanding ourselves, weighing the facts of life, finding strength for the day's tasks. It is here that "Let the Lord take care of them," or, as someone has put it, "Let go and let God," has real meaning for us. If we come to Him in faith seeking His help we may be sure that His blessing will be ours.

Isaiah expresses the promise: "Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted, but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." It is a wonderful thing to be able to fall back on God, to let Him take care of those things that are so far beyond us, to have His strength for the task to which we set our hands, to realize that there is a Rock of Ages and that we can hide ourselves in Him.

Let the last verse of the 27th Psalm serve as a text for us: "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord."

Prayer: May we know the richness of Thy grace in our lives, O God, as we yield ourselves to Thee. In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Editor is glad to be on the mailing list for weekly or monthly church bulletins from a number of our member churches. He hopes that other churches will put him on their lists, also, that he may from time to time glean news notes for THE CONGREGATIONALIST.

YOUR MISSIONARY CHECKS

In order to avoid unnecessary delay and effort in transmitting funds for the missionary work of the National Association, those who send checks for this purpose are requested to observe the following instructions.

Checks should be made payable to the Missionary Society of the Congregational Christian Churches, or to Howell D. Davies, Treasurer.

They should be mailed to Dr. Davies at Room 2308, 100 North LaSalle Street, Chicago 2, Illinois.

They should be accompanied by letters stating the project or person for whom the gifts are intended. (If no project is specified the funds go into the general fund of the Missionary Society, from which the Directors make appropriations as seems best.)

Please do not send *missionary* checks to the Milwaukee or Oregon City offices. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

From the Letter Box

Editor, THE CONGREGATIONALIST:

The present trend to bigness in every aspect of our lives is opposed to the basic idea of the freedom we as individuals cherish. Industry in our country must be big to survive. Small businesses are finding survival more difficult each year. The labor unions have grown so large that the individual no longer has a voice in the policies of operation. And now our churches are caught in this scramble for bigness.

As a member of the First Congregational Church of Wayne, Michigan, I am opposed to the proposed merger. I enjoy the church's emphasis on faith, freedom, and fellowship as opposed to creeds and codes. I take pride in the history and traditions of my church.

The early history of the churches which later came to be called Congregational gives evidence of avoiding ecclesiastical domination. I fear this domination will return if we merge with another church which accepts it.

Our churches are growing rapidly; we have experienced bad years without harm. The effectiveness of religion on the individual is not measured by size. I believe a small church organization can be more personal in meeting the needs of its members. I can find no reason for this merger; I strongly oppose any action to merge.

(MRS.) MARY L. MARTIN,
Wayne, Michigan

NEWS NOTES

Attendance records of the Congregational Church at Eaton Rapids, Michigan, show a consistent gain in the morning congregations as compared with last year.

* * *

The Croys Creek Congregational Christian Church of Reelsville, Indiana, has recently voted to become a member of the National Association.

Congregational Bookshelf

Rev. Royal G. Davis, Los Angeles, California

Hartford, Connecticut, was founded by Thomas Hooker as a democratic refuge from the growing oppressiveness of the Bay Colony. In 1814 New Englanders gathered there to reassert states' rights against the folly of centralized government at Washington. And here Horace Bushnell became the champion of liberal Christianity for the 19th century. North Church was a bright light of Congregational independency when too many churches had forgotten what it means to be free under God.

Dr. Bushnell and Dwight L. Moody tower high above their contemporaries in the Congregational epic. One represents the finest expression of Christian liberalism as the other embodies the vigorous witness of evangelistic faith. Both were heart and soul Congregationalists and both had to reaffirm the autonomy of the local church in order to do their work well.

The Massachusetts Sunday School Society refused to print Bushnell's CHRISTIAN NURTURE, now a classic, because they said it was controversial. Serious discussion of basic issues was frowned upon a century ago by the self-appointed protectors of Christian unity. Martin Luther had received similar criticism earlier, but neither the German reformer nor the Hartford minister would be silenced.

Bushnell spoke for and to the growing middle class of merchants, factory owners, business and professional people. He stood for reasonable religion wedded to enthusiastic commitment. He highlighted the moral implications of the Gospel as the best way to explain the Christian message. He tried to bridge the gap between Congregationalists calling themselves Orthodox and those called Unitarian.

B. M. Cross has prepared a worthwhile, well-documented study of HORACE BUSHNELL, MINISTER TO A CHANGING AMERICA. Those who want to see the troubles and problems, the hope and faith of the great century, not really so unlike our own, will find this book instructive. (University of Chicago Press $6)

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